

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method, comprising:

registering a user from a browser, at a main web site;

generating, at the main web site, a linking page, containing a link to an affiliated web site;

advising the user about an available service offered at the affiliated web site, which can be reached through the link;

choosing, by the user, to connect to the affiliated web site for the available service through activating the link on the linking page;

issuing, by the main web site, upon on the link being activated, a ticket, to the user, encoded with different kinds of information related to the user;

requesting, by the user, the available service at the affiliated web site using the ticket; verifying, at the affiliated web site, the ticket transferred from the main web site; and providing the available service to the user if the verifying the ticket is successful.

2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the issuing a ticket comprises:

gathering information related to the user;

issuing a timestamp;

generating a digital signature of the ticket;

creating the ticket based on the information related to the user, the timestamp, and the digital signature; and

encoding the ticket.

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3. The method according to claim 2, wherein the verifying the ticket comprises:

decoding the ticket; and

authenticating the digital signature of the ticket.

4. A method for a main web site, comprising:

receiving a request from a user through a browser;

authenticating the user based on information stored at the main web site;

generating, at the main web site, a linking page, containing a link to an affiliated web

site;

advising, through the linking page, the user about an available service offered at the affiliated web site, which can be reached through the link;

receiving, from the user, a choice to connect to the affiliated web site for the available service;

issuing, upon receiving the choice of connecting to the available service, a ticket encoded with different kinds of information related to the user and to be used by the user to request the available service at the affiliated web site; and

transferring the ticket from the main web site to the user.

5. The method according to claim 4, wherein the issuing the ticket comprises:

determining the user's identification;

gathering information related to the user;

issuing a timestamp;

generating a digital signature of the ticket;

creating the ticket based on the information related to the user, the timestamp, and the digital signature; and
encoding the ticket.

6. The method according to claim 5, wherein the gathering the information related to the user includes at least one of:

retrieving the user's information from a user information database at the main web site based on the user's identification; and
obtaining the user's information from the user.

7. The method according to claim 6, wherein gathering the user's information includes:

gathering users language preference.

8. The method according to claim 5, wherein the encoding the ticket includes at least one of :

encoding the ticket in a cookie, if the affiliated web site is in the same domain as the main web site; and

encoding the ticket as a parameter of a universal resource locator address representing the location of the affiliated web site, if the affiliated web site is not in the same domain as the main web site.

9. A method for an affiliated web site, comprising:

receiving, a request from a user with a ticket comprising a digital signature and information related to the user;

authenticating the digital signature of the ticket;

decoding the ticket, after the digital signature is authenticated by the authenticating, to extract information related to the user;

registering the user based on the information related to the user; and

providing an available service offered at the affiliated web site to the user.

10. The method according to claim 9, wherein the information related to the user includes at least one of:

user's identification;
user's preferences; and
user's privileges.

11. The method according to claim 10, wherein the user's preferences include user's language preference.

12. The method according to claim 11, wherein the registering the user comprises:
determining, using the user's identification, whether the user is a new user, with respect to the information stored in a user's information database at the affiliated web site;
determining whether a new account should be opened for the user if the user is identified as a new user;

opening a new account for the user if it is determined that a new account should be opened for a new user;

authenticating, if the user is not a new user, using the information related to the user stored in the user information database;

determining, if the user is authenticated by the authenticating, whether the information related to the user decoded from the ticket is different from the information related to the user stored in the user's information database at the affiliated web site; and

updating the user's information database based on the information related to the user decoded from the ticket, if either the user is a new user or the information in the user information database at the affiliated web site is different from the information related to the user decoded from the ticket.

13. A system, comprising:
- a main web site for offering online services;
 - a web client comprising a browser and a user communicating with the main web site through the browser for the services;
 - an affiliated web site affiliated with the main web site for offering a service that can be advised to the user through the main web site and that can be provided to the user when the main web site transfers the user to the affiliated web site with a ticket containing information related to the user and a digital signature.

14. The system according to claim 13, wherein the main web site comprises:

a user registration mechanism for registering the user at the main web site when the user connects to the main web site via the browser;

a linking page generation mechanism for generating a linking page that contains a link to the affiliated web site and that is to be used to advise the user about an available service offered at the affiliated web site, which can be reached through the link;

an online service mechanism for providing the online services to the user; and

a service transfer mechanism for issuing the ticket to the user when the user chooses, through the linking page, to connect to the affiliated web site for the available service, the ticket enabling the user to connect to the affiliated web site without the need to enter the information related to the user.

15. The system according to claim 14, wherein the affiliated web site comprises:
- a ticket authentication mechanism for authenticating the ticket received from the user to request the available service;
- a registration mechanism for registering the user, after the authenticating the ticket, at the affiliated web site; and
- an online service mechanism for providing the user the available service.

16. A system for a main web site, comprising:
- a user registration mechanism for registering a user, requesting to connect to the main web site via a browser;

a linking page generation mechanism for generating a linking page that contains a link to an affiliated web site and that is to be used to advise the user about an available service offered at the affiliated web site, which can be reached through the link;

an online service mechanism for providing online services to the user; and

a service transfer mechanism for issuing a ticket to the user when the user chooses, through the linking page, to connect to the affiliated web site for the available service, the ticket enabling the user to connect to the affiliated web site without the need to enter the information related to the user.

17. The system according to claim 16, wherein the registration mechanism comprises:
- a user information database for storing the information related to users of the main web site;
- an authentication mechanism for authenticating the user based on the information stored in the user information database and the information entered by the user with the requesting; and
- a registration mechanism for registering the user at the main web site, provided that the user is considered authenticate by the authenticating, and for updating the information related to the user in the user information database according to the information provided with the requesting.

18. The system according to claim 17, wherein the service transfer mechanism comprises:

a ticket issuing mechanism for issuing the ticket based on the information related to the user;

a ticket signing mechanism for generating a digital signature based on a signing key for the ticket; and

a ticket encoding mechanism for encoding the ticket with the digital signature.

19. A system for an affiliated web site, comprising:

a ticket authentication mechanism for authenticating a ticket received from a user to request an available service at the affiliated web site, the ticket comprising information related to the user and a digital signature;

a registration mechanism for registering the user, after the authenticating the ticket, at the affiliated web site based on the information related to the user included in the ticket; and an online service mechanism for providing the available service to the user.

20. The system according to claim 19, wherein the ticket authentication mechanism comprises:

a signature authenticating mechanism for authenticating the digital signature of the ticket using a verifying key;

a ticket decoding mechanism for, after the digital signature of the ticket is authenticated, decoding the ticket; and

a ticket parsing mechanism for, after the ticket is decoded, parsing the ticket to extract the information related to the user.

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21. The system according to claim 20, wherein the registration mechanism comprises:

- a user status determiner for determining whether the user is a new user or an existing user or whether the information related to the user encoded in the ticket is different from the information related to the user stored in the user information database at the affiliated web site;
- a new user registration mechanism for, if the user is a new user, registering the user as a new user based on the information related to the user extracted from the ticket; and
- an existing user registration mechanism for registering an existing user, including authenticating the existing user, registering the existing user, and updating the information related to the existing user stored in the user information database, if the extracted information related to the user is different from the information related to the user stored in the user information database.

22. A computer-readable medium encoded with a program, the program, when executed, causing:

- registering a user from a browser, at a main web site;
- generating, at the main web site, a linking page, containing a link to an affiliated web site;
- advising the user about an available service offered at the affiliated web site, which can be reached through the link;
- choosing, by the user, to connect to the affiliated web site for the available service through activating the link on the linking page;

issuing, by the main web site, upon on the link being activated, a ticket, to the user, encoded with different kinds of information related to the user; requesting, by the user, the available service at the affiliated web site using the ticket; verifying, at the affiliated web site, the ticket transferred from the main web site; and providing the available service to the user if the verifying the ticket is successful.

23. The medium according to claim 22, wherein the issuing a ticket comprises: gathering information related to the user; issuing a timestamp; generating a digital signature of the ticket; creating the ticket based on the information related to the user, the timestamp, and the digital signature; and encoding the ticket.

24. The medium according to claim 23, wherein the verifying the ticket comprises: decoding the ticket; and authenticating the digital signature of the ticket.

25. A computer-readable medium encoded with a program for a main web site, the program, when executed, casing:

receiving a request from a user through a bowser; authenticating the user based on information stored at the main web site;

generating, at the main web site, a linking page, containing a link to an affiliated web site;

advising, through the linking page, the user about an available service offered at the affiliated web site, which can be reached through the link;

receiving, from the user, a choice to connect to the affiliated web site for the available service;

issuing, upon receiving the choice of connecting to the available service, a ticket encoded with different kinds of information related to the user and to be used by the user to request the available service at the affiliated web site; and

transferring the ticket from the main web site to the user.

26. The medium according to claim 25, wherein the issuing the ticket comprises:

determining the user's identification;

gathering information related to the user;

issuing a timestamp;

generating a digital signature of the ticket;

creating the ticket based on the information related to the user, the timestamp, and the digital signature; and

encoding the ticket.

27. The medium according to claim 26, wherein the encoding the ticket includes at least one of:

encoding the ticket in a cookie, if the affiliated web site is in the same domain as the main web site; and

encoding the ticket as a parameter of a universal resource locator address representing the location of the affiliated web site, if the affiliated web site is not in the same domain as the main web site.

28. A computer-readable medium encoded with a program for an affiliated web site, the program, when executed, causing:

receiving, a request from a user with a ticket comprising a digital signature and information related to the user;

authenticating the digital signature of the ticket;

decoding the ticket, after the digital signature is authenticated by the authenticating, to extract information related to the user;

registering the user based on the information related to the user; and

providing an available service offered at the affiliated web site to the user.

29. The medium according to claim 28, wherein the registering the user comprises:

determining, using the user's identification, whether the user is a new user with respect to the information stored in a user's information database at the affiliated web site;

determining whether a new account should be opened for the user if the user is identified as a new user;

opening a new account for the user if it is determined that a new account should be opened for a new user;

authenticating, if the user is not a new user, the user using the information related to the user stored in the user information database;

determining, if the user is authenticated by the authenticating, whether the information related to the user decoded from the ticket is different from the information related to the user stored in the user's information database at the affiliated web site; and

updating the user's information database based on the information related to the user decoded from the ticket, if either the user is a new user or the information in the user information database at the affiliated web site is different from the information related to the user decoded from the ticket.

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